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STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update

By Senator Howard Marklein

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Summarizing the Governor's Budget Address

Governor Scott Walker delivered his Budget Address on Wednesday, February 8, 2017. This biennial speech officially launches the legislature's budget process. The address is the Governor's opportunity to pitch and highlight the ideas, programs and priorities he has included in his version of the state budget.

As I listened to Governor Walker's Budget Address, there were several main themes: student success, reduced college costs, care for the needy, rewarding work, maintenance of roads and bridges and lowering taxes. Following is a summary of the Governor's proposed plan for each of these areas:

Student Success – the Governor's plan:

- Invests \$11.5 billion for K-12 education.
- Includes a \$200 per student increase in the first year and a \$204 increase per student in the second year.
- Continues funding for Academic and Career Plans.

Reducing College Costs – the Governor's plan:

- Freezes tuition at Wisconsin Technical Colleges
- Reduces tuition for undergraduates from WI at UW campuses by 5%.
- Invests \$100 million in new state funding for the UW and allocates an additional \$35 million to cover the reduction in tuition for Wisconsin students.

Care for the Needy & Rewarding Work – the Governor's plan:

- Develops the *Wisconsin Works for Everyone* program for positive entitlement reform.
- Requires able-bodied adults to be employed at least 80 hours per month to receive Foodshare benefits, or be enrolled in job training programs.
- Expands the Earned Income Tax Credit to enable both parents to work without losing the credit.
- Encourages parents who owe child support to work and pay their obligation.
- Expands programs to help people with disabilities find work.
- Develops programs to help young adults aging out of Foster Care to find work.
- Expands career and technical training in correctional facilities to improve transitions.

Maintenance of roads and bridges – the Governor’s plan:

- Increases funding for local governments to fix roads and bridges.
- Invests the largest amount ever for rehabilitation of state highways.
- Puts all active major projects outside of southeastern WI back on track.
- Funds the work on I-94 in Kenosha and Racine counties.

Lowering Taxes – the Governor’s plan:

- Promises new tax relief of \$592.7 million.
- Promises that for the first time since 1931, no state tax will be collected on property taxes.
- Implements the manufacturing and agricultural production tax credit.
- Creates a sales tax holiday on school supplies and clothing.
- Reduces income taxes. A typical family will see a reduction of \$130 in income taxes.

I am interested and encouraged by many of the Governor’s budget ideas. I believe we need to find a sustainable, responsible funding plan for transportation. I want to provide adequate funding to rural schools. Overall, I want to represent the needs of rural Wisconsin.

Following the address, the budget was officially delivered to the legislature’s Joint Finance Committee (JFC). It is now being deeply analyzed by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) before their analysis is shared with the JFC.

The JFC will be meeting with each of the state agencies to discuss their portion of the state budget beginning in March. Then, we will hold a number of public hearings around the state for citizens to share their thoughts, ideas and concerns before we deliberate as a committee.

Our goal is to draft a legislative version of the state budget and move it through the legislative process before the fiscal year ends on June 30, 2017. As a member of the JFC, I have been looking forward to receiving the Governor’s budget so that we can get to work on plans for the future of Wisconsin.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to better understand the programs in the Governor’s budget and the fiscal impacts of our decisions. I will work to ensure that we produce a balanced budget, on time, for the people of our state.

For a full text version of the Governor’s Budget Address, please visit:

https://walker.wi.gov/sites/default/files/2017_Wisconsin_Budget_Address.pdf

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.

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